LWN LONDON WEEKLY NEWS GROUP

Chelsea NEWS

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DUCHESS TO OPEN ACADEMY AND LEISURE CENTRE

Kate will meet local families in borough visit

THE makers of success stories in one of the most deprived areas of the capital are to get a "a huge boost" with a profile-raising visit to good works in North Kensington from Britain's No.1 media draw, the Duchess of Cambridge.

By LWN reporter **GEOFF BAKER**
geoff@londonweeklynews.co.uk

The Duchess (pictured) is making a special trip on Monday (January 19th) to help celebrate two of North Kensington's new triumphs – and to open the new leisure centre on the site of where her husband learnt to swim.

Kate has asked to meet volunteers and disadvantaged families when she attends a coffee morning at the highly-regarded Family Friends charity at St. Charles Square.

Family Friends is an award-winning charity set up in 1993 by local resident Shelia Paget to help families-in-need living in disadvantaged areas of Kensington and Chelsea through a befriending and mentoring service run by a network of trained volunteers.

In 2013 Family Friends won the Queen's Award for voluntary service and ahead of the royal visit it has been praised by Buckingham Palace for its good work, indicating Duchess of Cambridge's admiration for what they do.

In announcing the visit, the Palace said: "Family Friends carefully recruits, trains and matches volunteers with parents, children or adolescents. Its volunteers offer long-term practical and emotional help based on each family's unique needs and potential.

"They meet the family in their home, once a week for two hours, and pledge a year's commitment. Volunteers come from a wide range of backgrounds and are carefully selected for their qualities of warmth, empathy and understanding. Family Friends have assisted more than 700 families with over 95 per cent reporting improvements as a result of using their services.'

Family Friends volunteers say they are 'incredibly excited' about the visit as the ap-

■ TURN TO PAGE 3

Council to save the KPH

THE KPH is set to be saved - Royal Borough planners have stepped in to protect the hugely-popular community pub on Ladbroke Grove from being turned into luxury flats.

Following outcry from hundreds of residents, including rock star Cerys Matthews and former Home Secretary Alan Johnson MP, along with CAMRA and the Portobello Café Society, Kensington & Chelsea Council have weighed in to block the threatened development of one of West London's landmarks.

"This is terrific news,' said KPH manager Vince Power.

"It would be a real shame if the KPH was not a pub anymore. We have great support locally, the KPH is a true community place and it has been for 150 years."

The council says it already has in place planning policies to resist 'the loss of pubs and those uses which contribute to the character of a conservation area.

But it has now also imposed an immediate Article 4 Direction which will protect the pub's status for the next six months and means that a planning application will be re-

■ CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

INSIDE THE PAPER THE STARS LOVE TO BE IN ...

Pippa launches the London to Brighton bike ride - *see page 10*

TALK OF THE TOWN: The Voice returns with new coach Rita - *see page 21*

'Unsung champion of children around the world'

The pub that launches stars ...

Partnership with Gentoo Genie to build 2,000 new houses over 10 years

Mayor aims to deliver affordable homes

THE Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, has announced his intention for millions of pounds of funding for two new schemes to help Londoners into affordable home ownership and to accelerate the delivery of new homes.

Shared ownership helps people on low to medium incomes own a home, requiring much lower deposits, and will be given a further funding boost of up to £180 million with The Mayor's First Steps Challenge Fund.

The fund aims to accelerate the delivery of 4,000 new homes between 2015 and 2020 and is being made available on a recoverable basis so that money can be reinvested to provide more opportunities for affordable home seekers, helping achieve the Mayor's aim of assisting 250,000 Londoners into low cost housing by 2025.

The Mayor is also giving up to £40 million of loan finance to Gentoo's Genie for a new innovative housing product where buyers will need no deposit or mortgage to purchase their home and at the end of the agreement customers own 100 per cent of the home outright.

The scheme aims to deliver 2,000 new homes over the next 10 years, helping people who would struggle to save a large deposit for a mortgage.

The Mayor has already made efforts to help Londoners to own their own home with over 50,000 people expected to be helped into home ownership through his First Steps scheme over the course of his two Mayoral terms.

He has also moved to remove red tape and bureaucracy in the application and purchase process, providing greater choice and flexibility for purchasers, alongside steps to improve the mobility options available to existing purchasers of First Steps homes who need to move for family or employment reasons.

FROM THE MAYOR'S OFFICE

The Mayor said: "Shared ownership is crucial in helping the unprecedented numbers of people in London desperate for good quality low cost housing. Families need larger properties. I want this funding to help thousands more Londoners own homes and create more developments delivering excellent affordable properties.

"Gentoo Genie provides long term Home Purchase Plans for first time buyers and long term renters which enables them to buy shares in their home every time they make a monthly payment. This is the first time the scheme is being introduced to London following Genie's successful work in the North East of England. The GLA's funding is from the Mayor's Housing Covenant revolving fund and will be repaid in full within ten years."

Steve Hicks, Managing Director of Genie, said: "We set up Genie as a way to help those people who want to get onto the housing ladder but who haven't been able to because of a number of reasons, including saving for a deposit while renting.

"There has been a lack of innovation in the housing market which has left would-be homeowners feeling frustrated and unable to buy their own house. This 10-year partnership with the GLA will help customers into a minimum of 2,000 new homes in the capital who otherwise would have struggled to own their own homes, because of the difficult market conditions in London."

The First Steps Challenge Fund is part of the £1.45 billion the Mayor has secured from the Government for affordable housing delivery in 2015-18. The money is being made available on a recoverable basis and could take the form of an interest-bearing loan or equity investment, to encourage new players to deliver shared ownership homes and greater institutional investment into the tenure.

When the funding is paid back it can be reinvested into delivering more homes. This is part of the Mayor's London Housing Bank initiative to make longer term investment into housing and increase the pace of housing supply

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Apprenticeship Scheme

WESTMINSTER City Council is committed to helping young people into employment and is very proud of the apprentices on its Apprenticeship Scheme. It has been a huge success with positive feedback from both apprentices and line managers.

Apprenticeships are an excellent way of gaining qualifications, work based skills and experience with all apprentices provided with relevant workplace placements and training from a recognised OFSTED provider.

The council's current apprenticeship programme is delivered in partnership with the London Apprenticeship Company with opportunities at the council advertised on their website.

Kensington & Chelsea

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LWN NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER & PIMLICO editorial@londonweeklynews.co.uk

Call for 'bold moves' to tackle air pollution in the capital

● By LWN reporter **GEOFF BAKER**
geoff@londonweeklynews.co.uk

AIR pollution in Oxford Street this month was so bad that for the first time it broke EC laws.

Readings taken at the Oxford Street air quality monitoring station have shown that it was the first location in London to breach annual legal limits for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2).

NO2 is deemed to be harmful to human health and the EU permits an annual limit of no more than 18 hours per annum at the concentration of >200ug/m3

On Monday, January 5th pollution exceeded this annual limit for at least one hour.

Green GLA member Jenny Jones is protesting that the Government is currently trying to remove the requirement for local authorities to run air pollution monitors similar to those in central London, so that this information will not be available to Londoners in future years.

Jenny Jones said: 'Oxford Street is a disgraceful example of the Government and Mayor's failure to take responsibility for air pollution.

'As a result even more people will die prematurely and suffer worse asthma and other respiratory conditions. The Government's attempt to cover this up and hide the truth from local people must be resisted.

"A recent court case means that the Government can't delay meeting the legal deadlines for nitrogen dioxide and the Mayor needs to rewrite his Air Quality Strategy to include effective new measures that can clean up our air sooner rather than later.

"He must also drop all his road building plans which will increase traffic and air pollution in London.'

Jenny Jones has also advocated the following emergency and long-term measures to tackle air pollution:

● A smog forecast and alert system that informs the public and particularly vulnerable people such as asthmatics, with more detailed messaging and resources at schools, hospital and emergency services. She said this could encourage behaviour change to reduce pollution (such as not driving) and to reduce harm (such as not doing vigorous exercise near main roads).

● Traffic restrictions on certain roads so only essential vehicles can travel along them.

● Bring forward the Mayor's Ultra Low Emission Zone by 2018 (the Mayor's plan is 2020) and extend the ULEZ to surrounding boroughs that want it.

● Clean up the bus fleet by only introducing new buses that are hybrid or electric and that meet or exceed the Euro VI air quality standard.

● Reverse the recent and expected future increases in traffic levels by investing more in the bus and cycling networks, cancelling road building projects.

Stephen Knight, Liberal Democrat London Assembly environment spokesman, joined the criticism over the air in Oxford Street.

He said: "For an annual limit on air pollution to be breached within just a few days is a clear demonstration that real action needs to be taken to tackle air pollution.

"The Mayor's proposed Ultra Low Emission Zone is simply too little, too late. The Mayor's proposals will even allow highly-polluting diesel vehicles, including TfL vehicles, to remain on London's roads for many years after it finally starts.

"It is time to face up to the reality that only bold measures will tackle air pollution in London. The pedestrianisation of Oxford Street and a big switch to electric buses and taxis across London are now desperately needed."

OXFORD STREET 'DISGRACEFUL EXAMPLE' OF GOVERNMENT FAILURE

The fight to save Tin Pan Alley

■ **FROM PAGE ONE**

a bustling and busy music business 'bubble', a new rock quarter and hub for the music scene.

'The idea came to me after meeting with Laurence Kirschel, the owner of Consolidated Developments,' said Mr Scott-Irvine.

"He said to me that musicians and music businesses need to show faith in Denmark Street and if they do he will rent them space. If they don't, then the floors above existing shops will become flats.

"That set me thinking and I realised that if we can bring parts of the record industry, musicians and music business services back into the area, with businesses like high end hi-fi and post production studios, then the music industry can save the street itself.

"So I'm going to putting a call-out to the industry and its principal figures because this is something that we can all do together. It's very eleventh hour but on the other hand it could be a whole rebirth for the street."

In giving permission to Consolidated Developments for partial demolitions, Camden Council stressed that all of the shops in the street should remain "music-related".

Mr Kirschel already has plans for a new 800-seat underground music venue, a rock hotel like the famed Chateau Marmont in Los Angeles and a rock and roll hall of fame with statues of famous figures associated with Tin Pan Alley.

■ **STRONG CONNECTIONS WITH DENMARK STREET: Elton John and Donovan**

But for one Denmark Street venue, the rock rescue package will come too late. The award-winning 12 Bar Club will close this week after playing host to hundreds of bands since 1992.

The club has been served with notice to quit and will shut its Denmark Street doors on Friday (January 16th).

Over the years the award-winning club helped launch the careers of many top acts, including: The Libertines, Adele, Jeff Buckley, Keane, Katie Melua, Martha Wainwright, KT Tunstall, Seasick Steve, Regina Spektor, Robin Hitchcock and Jamie T.

The 12 Bar Club held a 'wake' show last Sunday with a different band playing every 15 minutes from lunchtime to 3.0 am. The club's last gig will be on Wednesday [Jan 14].

Consolidated Developments are to demolish parts of the immediate area as part of its development for a mixed-use block on St Giles High Street and to create pedestrian access for the huge flows of people expected to use the new Crossrail station.

Consolidated will demolish 1-6, 17-21 Denmark Street and York and Clifton Mansions. There will also be partial demolition of 21 Denmark Street and the back alley of Denmark Place.

Sex Pistols graffiti

It is hoped that graffiti left behind on the upper floor at the rear of No 6 by The Sex Pistols will be preserved. The Sex Pistols lived above No 6 and recorded their first demos there. One rock magazine recently described the graffiti 'as important a find (for UK music historians) as the cave paintings at Lascaux'.

Tin Pan Alley began as the hub for London's music scene in 1911 when music publisher Laurence Wright set up premises at No 11 and subsequently founded the music magazine Melody Maker. The New Musical Express was founded at No 5 in 1952. By the end of the 1950s numerous music publishers had moved to the street.

● LIONEL Bart, writer of the musical 'Oliver', started his writing career for music publishers in Tin Pan Alley and became known as 'the king of Denmark Street'.

But as the music publishing trade in the street began to decline in the 1960s, recording studios and new bands moved in. In 1961 Regent Studios were founded at No 4. The Rolling Stones recorded their first album and early singles there.

Other top Sixties musicians who recorded in Denmark Street include The Who, Black Sabbath, The Kinks, Jimmy Page and Donovan. Elton John, who first worked there for Mills Music and then Dick James Music – publishers of The Beatles songs – later wrote the music for his first hit, 'Your Song', in Denmark Street.

Musicians often socialised around The Gioconda Café at No 9. David Bowie recruited his first backing band there and it was also the venue where The Small Faces formed. Other patrons of the café included Engelbert Humperdinck, Rod Stewart and the legendary guitarist Jimi Hendrix.

Recycle your Christmas tree

THE turkey's been eaten, the lights have come down and the last bauble has finally been taken off the tree.

As London gets back to normal after Christmas, households across the city are gradually removing the last remnants of the festive season – including the Christmas tree itself.

Westminster City Council has issued advice on how households can make sure their Christmas trees go to a good home.

There are 23 recycling points throughout the city where residents can recycle their Christmas trees.

Any natural Christmas trees taken to the recycling points will be turned into mulch and used as compost.

Cllr Ed Argar, Westminster City Council cabinet member for city management, said: "As households across Westminster begin removing all traces of the Christmas festivities from their homes, we have made it as easy as possible for them to begin 2015 in an environmentally friendly way by recycling their Christmas trees at one of the drop off points throughout the city.

"This is an opportunity to start as you mean to go on, and I would encourage residents to make use of all Westminster's recycling services throughout the rest of the year. With everyone's help, we can make this the best year we've ever had when it comes to recycling in Westminster."

The drop-off points are open until Thursday 15 January 2015.

Opening hours are 8am to 8pm, apart from the recycling points in parks, which close at 4.30pm.

Information on Christmas recycling is available here:
https://www.westminster.gov.uk/xmas-recycling

WHY I ♥ SOHO

LONG established as one of London's most vibrant entertainment districts, for much of the 20th century, Soho had a reputation as a base for the sex industry in addition to its night life and as a location for the headquarters of leading film companies.

Since the 1980s, the area has undergone considerable transformation. It now is predominantly a fashionable district of upmarket restaurants and media offices - home to industry, commerce, culture and entertainment, as well as a residential area for both rich and poor.

Soho remains one of London's most charismatic areas in which to live and work - and that's why we are launching a new **"Why I Love Soho"** feature.

If you live or work in Soho we would like you to send us five reasons why you love Soho (maximium 300 words) so much.

Email your five **"Why I Love Soho"** reasons to

editorial@londonweeklynews.co.uk stating your name, address or place of work, and attaching a photo of yourself.

◆ **Copies of the London Weekly News are available in Soho from the Co-op in Berwick Street. We are looking for more outlets. If you know of a shop or business which would be prepared to stock the LWN, please email philip@londonweeklynews.co.uk**

A LITTLE EFFORT, A BIG REWARD

Can you help dogs belonging to families fleeing domestic violence?

Dogs Trust Freedom Project needs volunteers for our fostering service. Foster placements last for up to 9 months and all the dog's expenses are covered by Dogs Trust. You must have experience of caring for dogs and ideally have no other pets at home.

If you live in Greater London and want to find out more, visit our website or call us on...

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LWN NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER & PIMLICO editorial@londonweeklynews.co.uk

Shock news on global warming: keep oil reserves in the ground

SHOCK news for motorists and oil company investors – new research by scientists at University College London shows that much of the planet's oil reserves should stay in the ground in order to halt global warming.

The research says a third of oil reserves, half of gas reserves and over 8 per cent of current coal reserves globally should remain in the ground and not be used before 2050 if global warming is to stay below the 2°C target agreed by policy makers.

The study by the UCL Institute for Sustainable Resources, funded by the UK Energy Research Centre and published in *Nature*, also identifies the geographic location of existing reserves that should remain unused and so sets out the regions that stand to lose most from achieving the 2°C goal.

The authors show that the overwhelming majority of the huge coal reserves in China, Russia and the United States should remain unused along with over 260 thousand million barrels oil reserves in the Middle East, equivalent to all of the oil reserves held by Saudi Arabia.

The scientists say the Middle East should also leave over 60 per cent of its gas reserves in the ground and the development of resources in the Arctic and any increase in unconventional oil – oil of a poor quality which is hard to extract – are also found to be inconsistent with efforts to limit climate change.

I did my Tax Return early and found inner peace.

31st January is the deadline for your online Self Assessment Tax Return. If you miss it you will get a £100 penalty. So why not do it today, pay what you owe and take a load off your mind?

gov.uk/selfassessment

HM Revenue & Customs

Writing for the **London Weekly News** every week, London's favourite entrepreneur

Charlie Pipes Up!

Terrible news for brave little Chloe and her lovely family

SOMETIMES things in the real world just aren't fair I know, but it was a real shock to me when I heard from three year old little Chloe's mum, Karen, at the weekend, telling me that her beautiful daughter's cancer had returned.

Readers of my column will know that the money (£100,000) for specialised treatment was in place, the airfares to Michigan, USA, where the treatment is available, were booked, and then the family received this shocking blow.

Chloe had just come through several days of exhaustive testing, but sadly an initial MIBG scan, as part of her disease reassessment, showed that the disease has returned. And because of this Chloe can no longer have the treatment she needs in Michigan, as she had to have had a clear scan to be accepted.

The next steps for Chloe and her family will become clearer over the next few days, as the specialists decide what the best course of treatment is.

In her email to me Karen thanked everyone for their kind donations urging that people should not feel that their efforts and kindness were in vain, as she was hopeful that Chloe would recover again, thanks to her medical team having caught the remission so early.

At Pimlico I know I can say that everyone here and all our customers and suppliers who have been touched by Chloe are wishing, hoping and praying, for her to get well again soon, and for her once again to be in a position to undergo the treatment she so desperately needs in the United States.

I know the appeal ended on Saturday, but my vans will continue to carry the stickers of Chloe on their doors, and later today I will put another £1,831 onto her Just Giving page, taking the total to just under £130,000, which I hope will ultimately make the difference for this gorgeous little girl and her lovely family.

Best tax cut ever – so please keep those fuel prices falling!

WHAT do I know about oil? Not a lot, it has to be true. What I do know is it's the raw material for petrol and diesel, and as far as I'm concerned the lower the price of a barrel of crude on the international market the better.

Where else can you get an effective £250,000 rebate?

Yep, that's how much we're on target to save if fuel drops to about a quid a litre and manages to stay down at that level for a year or more. And for us that's eight or nine new vans on the road.

And I'm not alone; just think how much UK PLC will be able to plough back into their businesses! Millions and millions if one plumber with 180 vans can save a quarter of a million. Thinking about it, it's going to run to billions.

And just think how much foreign exchange we save, as net importers of oil, and that's got to be good for the deficit situation. Really nice to see the Russians and the Saudis feeling the squeeze for a change.

And another thing, as the prices come down those greedy oil baron bastards better keep the petrol price dropping too!

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LWN NEWS FROM KENSINGTON & CHELSEA edit@londonweeklynews.co.uk

Kate to meet local families

THE makers of success stories in one of the most deprived areas of the capital are to get a "a huge boost" with a profile-raising visit to good works in North Kensington from Britain's No.1 media draw, the Duchess of Cambridge.

The Duchess (pictured) is making a special trip on Monday (January 19th) to help celebrate two of North Kensington's new triumphs – and to open the new leisure centre on the site of where her husband learnt to swim.

Kate has asked to meet volunteers and disadvantaged families when she attends a coffee morning at the highly-regarded Family Friends charity at St. Charles Square.

Family Friends is an award-winning charity set up in 1993 by local resident Shelia Paget to help families-in-need living in disadvantaged areas of Kensington and Chelsea through a befriending and mentoring service run by a network of trained volunteers.

In 2013 Family Friends won the Queen's Award for voluntary service and ahead of the royal visit it has been praised by Buckingham Palace for its good work, indicating Duchess of Cambridge's admiration for what they do.

In announcing the visit, the Palace said: "Family Friends carefully recruits, trains and matches volunteers with parents, children or adolescents. Its volunteers offer long-term practical and emotional help based on each family's unique needs and potential.

"They meet the family in their home, once a week for two hours, and pledge a year's commitment. Volunteers come from a wide range of backgrounds and are carefully selected for their qualities of warmth,

● By LWN reporter **GEOFF BAKER**
geoff@londonweeklynews.co.uk

empathy and understanding. Family Friends have assisted more than 700 families with over 95 per cent reporting improvements as a result of using their services.'

Family Friends volunteers say they are 'incredibly excited' about the visit as the approbation of such a figure as the Duchess of Cambridge will be a big help to raising the profile of the charity.

Flora Taylor, Chief Executive, said: "We are delighted that the Duchess of Cambridge is visiting Family Friends and meeting some of our volunteers and families. As a small, niche charity providing a vital service in deprived parts of West London, a Royal visit is a huge boost and it will hopefully encourage more people to volunteer and support struggling families in their community'.

The Duchess will then move on to visit the highly-praised Kensington Aldridge Academy, a new secondary school in the heart of North Kensington with 900 students, all of whom living less than a mile away.

The Duchess will officially open the school, meet students, staff and governors and will tour the building and watch part of a lesson and a dance performance in the school's theatre.

She will also visit the school's 'Creates Hub' which trains and encourages young entrepreneurs and will meet students who are designing items for sale at Portobello Market.

Last year the school, headed by principal David Benson, was hailed by the Department of Education as, "one of the best new academies that we have ever seen".

Ofsted has also praised the school, saying: "The academy has had a fantastic run-up and clear policies are in place which put students and their personal development at the heart of the school."

Mr. Benson aims to make the school, which opened in September last year, one of the finest in Britain. Students work through a seven-hour day from 8.30 am to 5.0 pm, adhering to high standards of courteous behaviour and smart dress with English, maths and science as the core subjects and an emphasis on entrepreneurial spirit and the creative and performing arts.

At the time of his appointment Mr Benson said: "My vision is to make this school the best in the UK. We want our students to have a strong sense of ownership and pride in the academy.

"I know there will be challenges ahead but there is absolutely no reason why kids in North Kensington cannot succeed, given the right environment. I have a wealth of experience in working in disadvantaged communities and that experience tells me that no matter what the child's background the potential is there.":

Last night he said: "We are thrilled to have established a brand new secondary school in the heart of North Kensington, providing much needed places for our community. The planning for KAA started many years ago, and has been supported at every stage by both the Aldridge Foundation and the Royal Borough. Our staff and students are so excited at this rare and wonderful opportunity they have to found a new school in spectacular buildings. I have every confidence they will repay the investment we have made in this new facility by delivering the very best results in years to come."

Sir Rod Aldridge, founder of the academy's lead sponsor the Aldridge Foundation, said: "We had a rare opportunity to work with the Royal Borough to create a new, exceptional academy to join our and the Council's respective families of schools. We planned for an academy that would deliver the highest standards of attainment, building on success already achieved in neighbouring primary schools. I am confident that KAA will make a real difference to our students and to the local community it serves. We are thrilled that Her Royal Highness will be opening this wonderful new school in Kensington this month."

After meeting students of the Aldridge Academy, the Duchess will move on to the nearby Kensington Leisure Centre to officially open the £29.4 million building created by the Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council.

The leisure centre, which includes an eight-lane swimming pool, a teaching pool, an 120-station gym, eight-court multi-use hall, two fitness studios and steam and sauna rooms, has been built on the site of the old centre where, during their time at Wetherby School, her husband and brother-in-law, Prince William and Prince Harry, both learned to swim.

Mayor of the Royal Borough, Councillor Maighread Condon-Simmonds, said: "We are deeply honoured that Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cambridge will formally open the new academy and leisure centre.

"These projects have involved several years of hard work and represent a major investment in the area. We are very much looking forward to welcoming Her Royal Highness and showing her round these magnificent buildings.

Council to save the KPH

THE KPH is set to be saved - Royal Borough planners have stepped in to protect the hugely-popular community pub on Ladbroke Grove from being turned into luxury flats.

Following outcry from hundreds of residents, including rock star Cerys Matthews and former Home Secretary Alan Johnson MP, along with CAMRA and the Portobello Café Society, Kensington & Chelsea Council have weighed in to block the threatened development of one of West London's landmarks.

"This is terrific news,' said KPH manager Vince Power.

"It would be a real shame if the KPH was not a pub anymore. We have great support locally, the KPH is a true community place and it has been for 150 years."

The council says it already has in place planning policies to resist 'the loss of pubs and those uses which contribute to the character of a conservation area.

But it has now also imposed an immediate Article 4 Direction which will protect the pub's status for the next six months and means that a planning application will be required if it is proposed to change to another use.

Essentially the direction removes the owners' right to an automatic switch to another "A Class" use, such as a shop, financial or professional service, restaurant or café, or for a temporary office.

Such a move would now require planning permission, which the indications are that any development would be unlikely to get.

In 2013 the council won a long-running battle for planning powers that would enable it to resist the conversion of pubs and other community uses to other uses, including residential, use where they make an important contribution to the community.

Ladbroke Grove conservation and community groups called on the entire area to rise up and fight developers' plans to shut the KPH.

An action group, KPH United, was formed to call on Kensington & Chelsea Council to step in and invoke special powers to block a change of use.

Campaigners have filed an application for official status as an Asset Of Community Value, rein-

forcing the pub's popularity with all sections of the community, and to protest in defence of its long-standing as a prominent feature of a conservation area.

The Kensington Park Hotel was built in 1860, when there were still hayfields beyond the railway bridge. In the Forties and Fifties it was the local of Timothy Evans, who was wrongfully executed – and later pardoned – for the murder of his wife and child, crimes later attributed to another pub regular, the serial killer John Christie. The KPH features in the movie 10 Rillington Place that Richard Attenborough and John Hurt made about the infamous miscarriage of justice.

Last year the long-standing owners Punch Taverns sold the pub freehold to SWA Developments Ltd. The new freeholder started court proceedings to forfeit the lease.

But the new freeholder has said that if it fails in its attempt to obtain an early termination of the KPH lease, it will refuse to grant a new lease when it comes up for renewal in January 2016.

Cerys Matthews has been leading a social media campaign to stop her local becoming flats for the rich. KPH United launched a Twitter campaign and a Facebook group and an online petition to galvanize all residents and workers in the area to join forces and urge Kensington & Chelsea Council to heed the call of their electorate – and the campaign has worked.

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1996

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* ***Free agency. Many students are currently involved in West End productions, TV and film work***
* ***Big talent competition once a year judged by professionals from the industry***
* ***Step Up groups enter Comic Relief does Glee Club (we have won this show with Soul Mates and reached the finals with Origin8) and Britain's Got Talent***
* ***Step Up students perform on a West End stage at least once a year***

Step Up has a very different feel to many stage schools. Most of the staff have been involved with Step Up from the beginning. It is a strong team who know all the children well' Jo (mother of Misha)

NEWS: Step Up is opening an additional branch at ***Colfes School*** on Saturday mornings from ***9am to 12pm*** from ***January 2015***. This will be in addition to the classes that already operate from Colfes on Sunday mornings from 10am to 1pm.

New Term begins on Saturday 10th and Sunday 11th January. You can turn up to any class and have a free session

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LONDON WEEKLY NEWS

Marching merrily into a new year

Parade celebrates London on the move

WORLD CLASS TWIRLING outside the Palace of Westminster. The Big Bertha Longhorn Band from Austin, Texas, with their twirler Dr Coral Noonan-Terry, a bronze medallist at the world baton twirling championships, were among the many American bands in the parade.

LONDON'S New Year's Day Parade was a particularly 'moving' experience as it celebrated the transport theme of London on the Move.

The parade, hosted by the Borough of Westminster, started from the Ritz Hotel and wound its way through the streets, finishing in Parliament Square three and a half hours later. It was partnered with Transport for London to celebrate the diversity and complexity of our transport system.

Fourteen London boroughs joined in the fun with transport entries and they were accompanied by thousands of performers, mostly Americans, who danced, drummed and performed along the route.

This was the 29th parade and organisers judged it the best yet, as NBC, CBS and CNN featured the event on their main American bulletins.

Bob Bone, executive director of the London New Year's Day Parade said: "The parade was without doubt the very best of all 29 to date - the crowds turned out in their droves - and the performers gave their all.

"The London borough entries shone particularly brightly, with some wonderfully crafted and choreographed entries.

"TFL does a tremendous job in keeping London on the move every single day of the year, and we are delighted that they have been one of our partners and producing this year's event."

The borough of Enfield topped the tree in the London Borough Competition for the very first time – earning £7,500 for it mayoral charity. Their entry entitled ' Under Your Own Steam' featured a people powered steam engine helping to create a leaner, greener borough.

Merton came a close second (earning £6,000 for the mayoral charity) with a kaleidoscopic entry featuring many facets of travel and transport from yesteryear to present day.

Hillingdon came third (£5,000), host borough Westminster came fourth (£4,000) with their travelling circus montage – which featured Coun Robert Davis riding a mechanical elephant.

Harrow came fifth (£3,000), Havering sixth (£2,000), Haringey seventh (£2,000), Croydon eighth (£2,000), Ealing ninth (£2,000) and Sutton tenth (£2,000).

In addition all the participating boroughs' mayoral charities raised money along the route.

London's New Year's Day Parade has raised millions of pounds for charities across the Capital – and injected more than £100m in to the economy of London.

The Mayor of Westminster Councillor Audrey Lewis said: "The 2.2 mile route of the parade allows hundreds of thousands of people to see the spectacle first hand and millions more to view it on TV. It is, without doubt, one of the great highlights of the year in London and an outstanding way to start 2015.

TRANSPORT FOR LONDON, partners in the parade, turned out a fleet of modern and vintage buses, taxis, 'Boris' bikes and the strange bustubetrain, drving through the confetti above

ENFIELD, first in the London Borough awards with their Under Your Own Steam engine

THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER chose a travelling circus theme for their float and deputy leader of the council, Robert Davis entered into the spirit by riding on an elephant

Where To Find Your Brand New Local Newspaper

Kensington News pick up points

TCG Co-op MM Premium	210-212 Earls Court Road	Kensington	SW5 9QB
Sainsbury's Store	158a Cromwell Road	South Kensington	SW7 4EJ
Tesco Metro	146-148 High Street	Kensington	W8 6SU
Sainsbury's Store	Ladbroke Grove	London	W10 5AA
Tesco Metro	224-226 Portobello Rd	Notting Hill	W11 1LJ
Tesco Metro	114-120 Notting Hill Gate	Notting Hill	W11 3QE
Tesco Super Store	West Cromwell Road	Kensington	W14 8PB

London Weekly News pick up points

Sainsbury's Store	Melbourne Avenue	West Ealing	W13 9BZ
Tesco Metro	94 Church Street	Paddington	NW8 8EX
Tesco Classic Metro	17-25 Regent Street	London	SW1Y 4LR
TCG Co-op City	104-105 Berwick Street	Soho	W1F 0QS
Sainsbury's Store	38 Stratton Street	Mayfair	W1J 8LT
Sainsbury's Store	15-17 Tottenham Court Road	Central London	W1T 1BJ
TCG Co-op MM Mainstream	504-506 Harrow Road	Paddington	W9 3QA
Tesco Classic Metro	22-25 Bedford Street	London	WC2E 9EQ
TCG Co-op City	Golden Cross House	London	WC2R 0RG

Westminister & Pimlico News pick up points

Sainsbury's Store	99 Wilton Road	Pimlico	SW1V 1DT
Tesco Metro	18-28 Warwick Way	Westminster	SW1V 1RX
Tesco Classic Metro	Dean Street	Westminster	W1D 3RS
Tesco Classic Metro	10-16 Goodge Street	Westminster	W1T 2QB
Tesco Metro	90-100 Edgware Road	Westminster	W2 2EA
TCG Co-op City	19-21 Store Street	Westminster	WC1E 7DB

LWN NEWS FROM KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA editorial@londonweeklynews.co.uk

Protecting play services in the borough

FOLLOWING extensive consultation with parents, the council has agreed how play services in the Royal Borough will be protected and placed on a sustainable financial footing for the future.

The plans will see responsibility for delivering after school and holiday childcare transferred from the council to primary schools or third sector providers from September 2015. The proposals will also see community play projects managed by third sector providers from April 2015, lifting the council's management burden and protecting valuable front line play services.

These moves have been prompted by the need for the Royal Borough to adjust to a permanently lower grant from central Government. The council estimates that it needs to reduce its recurrent spending by a further £54 million over the coming four years.

Whilst preserving a comprehensive childcare offer for working parents and, at the same time protecting community and adventure play projects ensuring they remain free for all, this strategy will yield the greatest levels of savings for the council (over £1.3 million in the first three years).

Up and down the country only a very small minority of local authorities provide play and childcare services directly. Six of the borough's primary schools are already providing high quality after school childcare and play services that reflect local needs at no cost to the council. Play centres managed by schools charge £32.50 per week for 15 hours of childcare, compared with £30 per week at council run centres. From September 2015, all working parents earning less than £150,000 a year will be able to claim back 20 per cent of the fees.

Councillor Elizabeth Campbell, the Royal Borough's cabinet member for Family and Children's Services, said: "We know how vital it is that our parents can access affordable, high quality after school childcare and primary schools in Kensington and Chelsea are already successfully delivering this service.

"While we can't guarantee that fees won't rise in the future, primary schools current charging structure isn't a world apart from those at council run centres. We are also giving schools transitional funding and with the Government's childcare subsidy coming into effect at the same time as the transfer we are confident that parents will be largely immunised from increases.

"This strategy will also ensure that our much-loved community play projects will continue to be free, on offer at the same locations across the borough and remain one of the best play offers in the capital."

Specialist play for children with disabilities will continue to be funded at current levels.

The council is increasing the number of free targeted places for children with disabilities or additional needs from 200 to 240.

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NEWS FROM NICK ...

with Nicholas Paget-Brown, Leader of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

New policing team making a difference for residents

I am very pleased to report that our new Community Policing Team has hit the ground running and is already making a real difference to the lives of residents.

After working closely with the Metropolitan Police, the team was established in November 2014 to deal with anti-social behaviour, licensing breaches and low-level crime, the sort of important local issues which are not always a priority for the police but which regularly concern residents and affect their quality of life.

Cllr Joanna Gardner, who has Cabinet responsibility for community safety, and I were delighted to join the new team when it started work in November. By the end of March the Community Policing Team will have 36 constables, four sergeants and an inspector, paid for through an annual £1.4 million investment by the council.

A great example of what the new Community Police Team can do to make a difference happened recently at Lowerwood Court, W11. Residents were having problems accessing their garages which were being used by rough sleepers, who made an awful mess and were quite aggressive when challenged.

But help was at hand – officers from the new team were able to dedicate time to this problem – they made arrests, cleared out the area and found out how the rough sleepers were getting into the garages. By working with the Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation it was possible to secure the garages quickly.

The good news is that, for now, these rough sleepers have not returned to Lowerwood Court

So we have a group of satisfied residents who are no doubt pleased to see police officers still visiting the area every day, just to make sure the problem is staying away.

Another excellent example of the co-operation between the council and the police was when a market trader from Portobello Road was arrested in late November 2014 by officers from the Community Policing Team. This followed an investigation by our Trading Standards officers into the sale of counterfeit goods.

The trader was charged with six offences under the Trade Marks Act 1994 and is due to appear in court later this month.

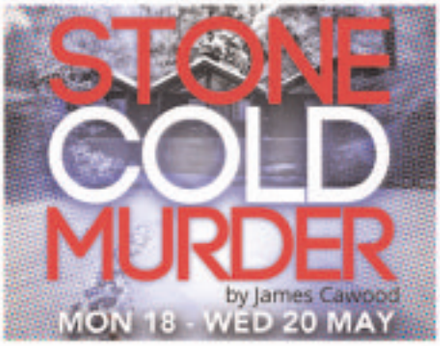
I hope that the Community Policing Team will go from strength to strength and make a real difference. It is there to improve and protect the quality of life of residents, businesses and visitors to the borough. If you have an issue that is affecting you – the police can be contacted on 101. Of course if a crime is taking place or someone is in immediate danger always call 999.

■ **COUNCILLOR Nick Paget-Brown with the new Community Policing Team**

THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA

To contact the Leader of the Council, Cllr Nick Paget-Brown, email theleader@rbkc.gov.uk

A GRAND START TO 2015!



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London to Brighton bike ride launched by Pippa Middleton

BRITISH Heart Foundation (BHF) Ambassador, Pippa Middleton has launched the 40th year of the charity's flagship fundraising event, the London to Brighton Bike Ride.

In the event's history, over 800,000 cyclists from all over the UK have taken part in the ride and helped to raise over £65m for the BHF's lifesaving research into heart disease.

Pippa, who raised over £15,000 for the charity on her own fundraising cycle ride across America last June, will be taking part in the iconic event on Father's Day this year (Sunday 21st June) to celebrate the landmark year.

The London to Brighton Bike Ride was launched in 1975 by street performer Robert Stredder and his partner after they wanted to organise a bike version of the London to Brighton car rally. It has grown from 36 riders in the first year to over 25,000 cyclists and is now the oldest and largest charity bike ride in Europe.

Launching the historic event, Pippa said: "As a keen cyclist, I am thrilled to be involved in this milestone year of the London to Brighton Bike Ride. This event is testament to the fact that cycling is such a great inclusive sport that everyone can enjoy and at the same time, through the money raised, it continues to help millions of people affected by heart disease.

"Whether you want to ride as part of a team or go the challenge alone, registration opens this Saturday, January 17th, so sign up. I look forward to seeing you all at the start line in June."

Tristam Jones, Head of Events at the BHF, added: "The London to Brighton Bike Ride has gone from being a jaunt down to the seaside for a group of friends, to an event which people have on their bucket lists. We're very proud of what this ride has achieved and thank all of those who have played their part."

● **Registration for the 40th London to Brighton Bike Ride opens on Saturday, January 17th at 10am. To register for your place on the event, go to bhf.org.uk/l2bday.**

Financial support for small businesses - where to start?

As a small business owner, what keeps you awake at night? For many, balancing the books is top of the list. Healthy finances are crucial to allow you to both invest in your business whilst protecting it from what the future may bring. Fortunately, there is a range of government support available to help your business to be secure and most importantly, grow.

One example of a small business which has received government financial support is Trunki. Their innovatively designed products (including their famous children's suitcase) have enabled them to access a range of government products and services, helping them to take huge leaps as a business.

"*Trunki has received government support in a number of ways." explains Rob Law, founder of Trunki. "Firstly, we worked hard to re-shore our manufacturing to our plastics moulding factory in Plymouth, allowing us to benefit from The Patent Box scheme.*"

The Patent Box enables companies to apply a lower rate of corporation tax to profits earned from patented inventions. It is being phased in over a four-year period and once the full benefit of the Patent Box is in effect (from April 2017) it will result in a ten per cent rate of corporation tax being applied to such returns.

"*We have always applied for patents for all of our products to build up our IP portfolio, it's one of the most valuable assets we have" said Law. "This scheme is brilliant, allowing us to re-invest more of our earnings back into the business. It motivated us to stay in the UK and not to offshore. It rewards inventive companies too, which can only be a good thing.*"

"*Secondly, we received government support through R&D tax credits for the development of our BoostAPak children's car seat and for the re-engineered version of our Trunki suitcases, which is now easier to manufacture in the UK and to recycle.*"

There are many types of financial support available to businesses with ambitions to grow. As well as the increasing variety of finance sources now available (such as crowdfunding, bank loans and peer-to-peer lending) there are many government schemes and incentives (on top of those Trunki accessed) devised to help small businesses secure the funding they need to succeed.

For example, your business may be eligible for financial support packages such as the Enterprise Investment Scheme, SMART grants or Social Investment Tax Relief. Or perhaps your business needs the support to secure initial funding to help turn your idea into a reality.

To learn about all of the finance options available to you and your business, and for more detail on how the government can support you financially, visit www.greatbusiness.gov.uk/finance

Economic think-tank predicts a fall in London property prices

EXPERT economists are predicting that almost £100,000 could be wiped off the value of the average home in Kensington and Chelsea this year with prices taking a dive as fears grow of a mansion tax.

The widely-respected Centre for Economic and Business Research (CEBR) is predicting an eight per cent fall in prices by October.

That would knock £96,000 off the value of the average home in the borough, currently £1.2 million.

A home currently worth £2 million stands to lose £160,000 in value if the forecast is right.

The news is even worse for owners of highest-end properties who stand to lose at least £1 million.

Leading estate agents Savills are predicting that if Labour wins the General Election in May and introduces its promised mansion tax it will cause a five per cent fall for prime central London homes - and a massive 10 per cent plunge in prices of super-prime homes of £10 million+.

For Chelsea FC owner Roman Abramovich that would mean losing almost £9 million off his £88 million home at Lowndes Square.

However, according to the Government the football-loving oligarch could be even more in the money – the Treasury's own forecast unit, the Office For Budget Responsibility, claims that property prices will RISE by 7.4 per cent this year, adding £6,512,000 to the value of Mr Abramovich's home.

But money experts are not convinced that the Treasury has got its prediction right. Financial forecasters FXstreet.com say: "We would regard the CEBR's outlook as the more credible. London prices are unlikely to be sustained into the near future as Russian, Chinese and Arab money is no longer gushing into the London property market.

"Other evidence also points to price falls; Zoopla, the respected property website, has said one third of all UK properties on sale currently have seen their asking price lowered at least once since coming on to the market.

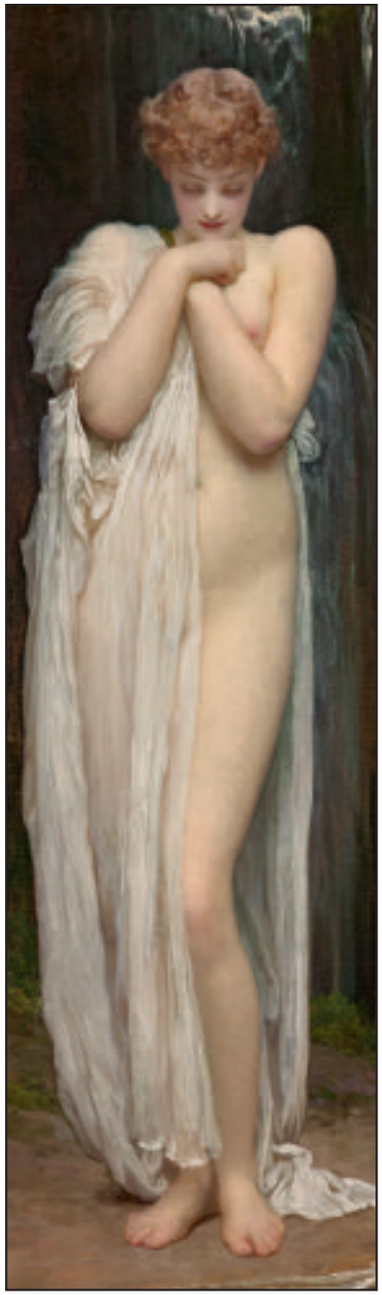
"Another longer-term factor which should begin to weigh in on the side of declining prices is potential rises in interest rates globally. In the UK, the current unsustainably-low level of near-zero per cent is likely to come under pressure soon. Bank of England governor Mark Carney indicated last year that he expected rates to rise by 3 per cent over the next three years.'

However, a fall off in the number of rich foreign buyers who account for more than half of all prime property sales could spell bad news for central London businesses.

A report on the prime residential market prepared for Westminster City Council last year revealed that the capital does very well from the super-rich.

"Typically, owners of properties worth more than £15 million each spend around £4.5 million in London annually. Those in the £5-£15 million range each spend around £2.75 million," said the report by Ramidus Consulting Ltd.

"Household expenditure by owners of properties worth over £5 million in Westminster exceeds £2.3 billion a year in London and the wider UK economy."



LEIGHTON's own picture Crenaia, the Nymph of the Dargle, 1880

HIGHLIGHT OF THE COLLECTION: The Roses of Heliogabalus

Indulging a Victorian obsession

THE restored Leighton House Museum, once the home of eminent Victorian artist Frederic Leighton, is currently hosting the The Pérez Simón collection.

The collection includes 52 exceptional and rarely exhibited paintings by leading Victorian artists, six of which are by Leighton himself, returning to the house where they were first painted.

The pictures all belong to the Mexican collector Juan Antonio Pérez Simón and form the largest private collection of Victorian art outside the UK.

Also on display are outstanding pictures by Albert Moore, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Edward Burne-Jones, John Everett Millais, John William Waterhouse, Edward Poynter, John Strudwick and John William Godward. These artists knew Leighton and were entertained at his house.

The collection's highlight is Lawrence Alma-Tadema's magnificent The Roses of Heliogabalus, one of the most iconic images of Victorian art which is now exhibited in London for the first time since 1913.

To make way for the exhibition, with the exception of Leighton's studio, the permanent collection has been cleared and the exhibition is hung throughout the house providing a unique opportunity to see these works against the backdrop of Leighton's decorative schemes.

The combination of the house and the paintings makes A Victorian Obsession an unmissable event and a one-off aesthetic experience for anyone interested in the art of the 19th century.

Leighton House Museum is at 12 Holland Park Road, W14 8LZ and tickets for the exhibition can be booked at www.rbkc.gov.uk/BuyTickets or call 0800 912 6968. The exhibition continues until March 29th.

LEIGHTON's Girls picking up pebbles by the sea

Help available to kick the habit

ALTHOUGH the capital has the lowest rate of smoking in the UK, Kensington and Chelsea Borough wants to cut the rate from 18per cent to nil – and to spread the word that 'rollies' are bad for you.

To aid the health drive, the council has launched a free advice programme for those wanting to quit the habit that kills more than 100,000 each year in the UK.

Royal Borough residents who would like to finally quit can call the Kick-it Stop Smoking Service on 020 3434 2500 for support and advice on how to quit. Information and support is also available online at www.kick-it.org.uk.

New research commissioned and published by Public Health England highlights the multiple impacts the toxic ingredients in cigarettes have on a the body, harming bones and muscles, increasing the likelihood of tooth damage and increasing the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease or developing age-related cataracts.

The Public Health England campaign also tackles common misconceptions around hand-rolled tobacco, or roll-ups.

New figures show that 49 per cent of smokers who only smoke roll-ups wrongly believe they are less harmful than manufactured cigarettes. In fact, hand-rolled cigarettes are at least as hazardous as any other type of cigarette.

Kick-It's Head of Stop Smoking Services, Simon Nadolski, said: 'We are here for smokers wanting help to quit and New Year is a great time to try. We provide a free, friendly stop smoking service on your doorstep.'

There are 10 million smokers in the UK and 22 per cent of people smoke, two thirds of them starting before their 18th birthday. London has the lowest rate of smokers in the UK, at 18 per cent. Forty years ago, 51 per cent of men and 41per cent of women smoked.

For more information on quitting smoking go to www.kick-it.org.uk or follow the campaign on twitter @KICK_IT_NOW

KEEP SAFE FROM FIRE – AT EVERY LEVEL

A few too many celebratory nights out and overindulgence during the festive season mean many of us are spending the cold, dark winter evenings at home in the new year. But those domestic treats to cheer us – the heater turned up to 'max', candles giving a soft glow and perhaps some chips cooking in the kitchen – can bring greater risks of fire in the home.

That's why the Fire Kills campaign together with fire and rescue services around the country is asking you and your household to take extra care and is recommending a few simple steps to keep everyone safe. These simple steps save lives.

More than nine out of ten homes now have at least one smoke alarm installed. But fire can break out anywhere in the home. To make sure that any smoke does set off your smoke alarms, install at least one on every level of your home and especially close to where you sleep.

If you test them at least monthly you can be confident that they are all working properly – both the power supply and the detection mechanism. Then you can be sure that you and your household will have the earliest possible warning of danger should a fire break out.

Last year 213 people died in fires in their home. The most common reason why smoke alarms didn't go off was because smoke did not reach the detector. Another reason was that the batteries were flat or missing. Working smoke alarms on every level really can save lives.

Once you know fire has started in your home, get out, stay out and call '999'. But how are you going to get out? That is the next simple step we are urging you to think about now – your escape routes. The best one is your normal way in and out of your home. Then you need a good back-up plan in case the fire is blocking that route.

Make sure all your routes are always clear of blockages you can control, like boxes and toys, and everyone knows where door and window keys are kept. A household planning session and practice run can be a life-saver for everyone – especially those who might need extra help with some routes or are a little slower. Most people overestimate their ability to escape a fire – often not realising the deadly effect of smoke. Surveys suggest that around 70 per cent of older people fall into this group but, sadly, over half of the people who died in recent domestic fires in England were aged 65 and over.

Don't risk tragedy in a fire in your home, follow these three simple steps:
Install a smoke alarm on every level and near sleeping areas
Test them at least monthly to make sure they are all working
Plan and practise your escape routes and keep them clear.
For more information and fire safety advice, visit www.gov.uk/firekills at www.facebook.com/firekills or follow us on Twitter @Fire_Kills

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FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS

London WEEKLY News

ISSUE 6 | PICK UP A FREE COPY | Thursday, January 15th 2015

‘Unsung champion of the children of the world’

LWN ROYAL SPECIAL

■ PHENOMENAL WORK RATE: The Princess Royal

Photo by DAVID HARTLEY/REX

ONE OF THE HARDEST WORKING MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL FAMILY, PRINCESS ANNE IS A ROLE MODEL

By Geoff Baker

SHE’LL grab a quick sandwich in the back of a car instead of ‘wasting time’ on a lavish lunch, she doesn’t court thanks or praise and without her millions of children around the world would face more suffering.

Variously described as ‘the best king we’ve never had’, ‘the hardest-working royal’ and ‘the unsung champion of the children of the world’, Princess Anne turns 65 this year and far from taking retirement, she shows no sign of slowing down.

In the past five years, The Princess Royal has undertaken around 2,500 official engagements. By the end of February she will have clocked up another 65; travelling to Scotland, Wales and all over the kingdom as she as she brings help and encouragement to the more than 200 organisations of which she is patron.

“Her work-rate is phenomenal,” said a close acquaintance, “and although much of the good work that she does goes largely unnoticed, it doesn’t bother her a bit; she is not one to seek the limelight, she just wants to roll up her sleeves and get on with it.”

> **‘Keep me busy. I’m here to work. I’m here to do good things and to meet as many people as possible’**

As such she has become a role model for new generations of the women of the Royal Family. Both Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, and Sophie, Duchess of Wessex, are said to have been inspired by The Princess Royal’s prodigious hard graft. Sophie in particular, whose number of royal engagements reveal her tireless dedication to her many projects, has been earmarked by observers as ‘the new Anne’.

Not that the original Anne has revealed any intention of passing the baton. As ‘retirement’ age looms, she is likely to treat it with as much indifference as when she turned 60 – ‘it’s just another birthday’, she said at the time.

“Her credo is ‘Keep me busy. I’m here to work. I’m here to do good things and to meet as many people as possible’”, said Kevin MacLeod, the

■ TURN TO PAGE 3

Inside London’s new weekly

◆ Where to see your favourite Royal - *page 3*

◆ The Queen’s jewels at the Tower of London - *page 4*

◆ Damian Lewis is King Henry VIII - *page 5*

Westminster & Pimlico News (established 1857) ◆ Chelsea News (established 1869) ◆ Kensington News (established 1869)

THE paper serving ROYAL London

ROYAL LONDON

No sign of retirement for Princess Anne

Princess Royal's 'no fanfare' work makes a world of diffence to her chosen charities

INSPIRED: Sophie Countess of Wessex has been dubbed 'the new Anne' because of the number of engagements she is undertaking. Here she is pictured visiting the Royal Artillery Barracks at Woolwich last month

Photos by DAVID HARTLEY/REX

FROM page 1

Canadian Secretary to The Queen.

And busy she is kept; aides say it is nothing for The Princess Royal to be in Scotland for one engagement in the morning and in Cornwall for another later the same day.

"The number of her engagements says a great deal about her, she treats them as her work and she is very workaday, Monday to Friday and sometimes weekends," said an aide.

"What is quite remarkable is that although she is patron of so many causes, she always fully briefs herself on every aspect of the organisation she's visiting and if she has to give a speech at a function she uses her own prep notes and speaks pretty much off the cuff.

"She knows what she's talking about, she's not the sort of public figure who has someone else prepare a long written speech for her; she makes herself fully informed."

And whereas other luminaries at official functions will like to enjoy a lengthy sit-down meal as reward for their efforts, for The Princess Royal such time-out is the stuff of nonsense.

"Instead of taking lunch after a function she'll have a sandwich in the back of the car on the way to another engagement, she doesn't want to waste time," said the aide.

Her hard work makes a difference. One of her most tireless roles is as the chief of The Princess Royal Trust For Carers, which was created on her own initiative in 1991. Before Anne stepped in the work of the UK's approximately six million carers went largely unnoticed and unappreciated. But she changed all of that.

But perhaps her most valuable work is for Save The Children, the charity of which she has been President for 45 years. Through her no-fanfare work to raise the profile and awareness of Save The Children, millions of children who might otherwise have suffered have been helped as Anne has made it one of the most renowned and respected aid charities in the world.

Every year she makes at least two trips to Africa to meet the children and the workers in the field. Unlike some others, she never seeks publicity for her visits, viewing the cameras and media entourage as getting in the way of work.

"The Princess Royal wouldn't ask for thanks, it's not her way, but a huge number of families in places most people have never heard of thank her in their hearts every day for the good she has achieved for them," said one aid worker, "She makes all the difference."

It was for her way of affecting change for the better that President Kaunda, former head of state of Zambia, nominated The Princess Royal for the Nobel Peace Prize.

"She loves people," he said. "She has extended that love to working for helpless children in many parts of the world. That is love in action."

LUNCH ON THE GO: Princess Anne would rather eat a snack in the back of her car and get on to her next appointment than spend time at official lunches

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WHERE TO SEE YOUR FAVOURITE ROYAL

FULL details of future and recent events in the ever-busy diaries of the many members of The Royal Family are available from the official website www.royal.gov.uk but here's the London schedule for the week ahead for Where To See A Royal.

Tuesday January 13th

● The Earl of Wessex, as trustee of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, will attend two gold award ceremonies at St James's Palace.

Wednesday January 14th

● The Princess Royal , as President of the Royal Yachting Association, will attend the Boat Show at ExCel, Royal Victoria Dock E16.

Thursday January 15th

● The Earl Of Wessex, as trustee of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, will hold a dinner at St James's Palace.

Friday January 16th

● The Earl Of Wessex , as trustee of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, will attend a development group meeting at Belgrave Road SW1.

Tuesday January 20th

● The Princess Royal will attend a reception for the Swinfen Charitable Trust at St James's Palace. As President of the British Olympic Association, The Princess Royal will also attend a National Olympic Committee meeting at Charlotte Street W1, and, as President of Victim Support, will host a dinner at St James's Palace.

BUCKINGHAM Palace has announced that the Queen and Prince Philip will undertake a state visit to Germany in June of this year.

An invitation issued by the Federal President of Germany, Joachim Gauck has been accepted and the visit will take place from Wednesday, June 24th to Friday 26th.

The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh have previously paid state visits to Germany in 1965, 1978, 1992 and 2004.

ROYAL LONDON

The Crown Jewels at the Tower of London

The Queen's most precious diamond

Jewel first discovered 110 years ago this month was tossed aside as worthless

By Geoff Baker

THE cost of a good quality, colourless one-carat diamond at a Bond Street jeweller will cost you around £20,000.

But that's nothing compared to The Queen's top diamond – at current gem weight rates, the stone alone was worth at least £150 million before it was cut.

Which makes it all the more surprising that when it was first discovered 110 years ago this month it was thrown out of a window at a mine near Pretoria by a worker who thought it was a worthless old rock.

Thousands visit The Tower Of London to marvel at the Crown Jewels that came from 'the old rock'.

Although they say at the Tower that what most excites visitors to the Crown Jewels is when a cabinet containing any of The Queen's bling is empty except for a note left inside saying 'this item is currently in use', little can match the wonder of seeing for the first time the magnificence of the gems. It is an experience that every visitor to London must have.

When the two largest diamonds in the Crown Jewels are 'in use' – set within the Sovereign's Sceptre with Cross and the Imperial State Crown – they must represent a security nightmare for those who guard the jewels against theft.

But when these most precious of all royal stones first began their journey to the Tower more than a century ago, their security was not always assured.

The two huge diamonds, Cullinan I (530.2 carats) and Cullinan II (317.4 carats) were both cut from the one enormous stone unearthed in 1905.

It was discovered on January 26th at the Premier Mine by the superintendent, Captain Frederick Wells, whilst doing his rounds. Wells saw a flash of light in the wall of the mine shaft – which he presumed at first to be a piece of glass planted by a miner as a practical joke.

He used his penknife to scrape out the stone and was somewhat astonished to realise that it weighed more than one pound. Wells took it to his site office to proclaim his miracle find but a co-worker dismissed his claim and chucked the rock out of the cabin window.

CULLINAN II: The Second Star of Africa is set into the band of the Imperial State Crown which is worn by Her Majesty at each State Opening of Parliament. The crown was remade in 1937 after the previous frame weakened under the weight of the gemstones.

CULLINAN I The Great Star of Africa set into the Sceptre with Cross

Presciently, Wells retrieved it and further examination revealed it to be a diamond of 3,106 carats.

Wells was awarded £350,000 (at today's rate) for the find and the Transvaal Colony government bought it and insured it for what would now be £150 million.

Following some debate, it was decided to present the stone – by now christened The Cullinan Diamond after the mine's owner, Sir Thomas Cullinan – as a gift to King Edward VII as a 66th birthday present.

This created a problem as it was thought that a gem of such unprecedented value could hardly be popped in the post. So a steamboat was commissioned to make the journey from South Africa.

The boat was crammed with armed detectives and a parcel was locked in the captain's safe and guarded 24-hours a day by riflemen.

However, when the ship reached London weeks later, the armed guard exercise was revealed to be a ruse and the parcel in the safe contained just a piece of kimberlite rock.

The authorities planned the top security boat trip as a diversionary tactic and the diamond HAD in fact been sent to London in a box in the post!

After the King had gleefully impressed the court with his birthday present, the stone was sent with another armed guard to Amsterdam to be cut by Asscher Brothers.

It is said that although Joseph Asscher was the greatest diamond cutter of his time, the task of cleaving such a fantastic stone with just a mallet and a specially-designed knife was so stressful that he had a doctor and nurse in attendance as he expected to faint from the anxiety.

Which is exactly what he did after his one blow split it in two.

The Cullinan was cut into nine major stones and 96 smaller stones.

Edward VII had Cullinan I (the Great Star of Africa) and Cullinan II (the Second Star of Africa) set respectively into the Sceptre With The Cross and the Imperial State Crown. The other stones initially remained with Asscher Brothers until they were bought by the South African government and presented to Queen Mary, queen consort of King George V, in 1910.

The Cullinans III to IX are most often worn as brooches. Cullinan III is a pear-cut 94.4 carat diamond and is sometimes worn by The Queen together with the square-cut 63.6 carat Cullinan IV – who affectionately refers to them as 'Granny's chips'.

The Crown Jewels are on display at The Tower of London, which is open every day. For opening times and ticket prices, see www.hrp.org.uk/TowerOfLondon

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SHOWBIZ SPECIAL *Damian Lewis on the BBC and in the West End*

I still forget my lines, says Lewis

Heartthrob actor has nightmares about first nights

HENRY VIII: Damian Lewis stars in Wolf Hall starting on BBC2 this week

by Geoff Baker

MAN of the moment Damian Lewis has faced daunting days like boot camp, dinner with President Obama and an investiture at Buckingham Palace, but fears about doing his day job still give him nightmares that he's getting shoved onstage naked.

The new hero of British acting is about to make his star even more sparkling next week when BBC2 begins broadcasting the eagerly-anticipated codpiece saga 'Wolf Hall', in which London-born Lewis plays Henry VIII.

Millions of viewers in the UK and the USA will follow him avidly as the six-hour series of bedding and beheading is screened on both sides of the Atlantic. But it's not that huge spotlight which gives Lewis jittery nights, it's the thought of returning to the West End in April to play to just 750 people every evening at Wyndham's Theatre and forgetting his lines.

"The thing that makes me most nervous is standing on a stage in a play in a leading role and the thought that it may all go out of my mind and I have no idea what I'm doing up there," says Lewis, who has become a pin-up through his roles in 'Band Of Brothers', 'Life' and 'Homeland'.

"You do have a lot of anxiety dreams before the first night – like being caught in the wings naked with somebody trying to push you onstage. It's all weird stuff."

He is coming back to the West End for the first time in six years to take the lead as Teach in 'American Buffalo', the play about three petty hustlers trying to swindle a man out of owning a rare coin.

The last time he was onstage in London – playing opposite Keira Knightley in Moliere's 'The Misanthrope' – his nightmare became a reality.

"I have gone up onstage,' he said, using the old acting slang for forgetting your lines.

"I actually go up repeatedly but you just have to work your way back and try to make sure that the audience didn't notice.

"I did it in the Moliere play. Nothing came out of my mouth in the middle of a long speech and I found myself improvising in rhyming couplets."

But forgetting his lines onstage has been a lifelong issue for Lewis, who decided in childhood that he would grow up to be an actor. At primary school he played in a Gilbert and Sullivan comic opera and forgot large chunks of it.

"When I was eleven I forgot the whole of the third act of Princess Ida," he said.

"I stood on the stage in front of the entire school with my teacher Mrs Woodgates singing at least one song for me and saying quite a lot of my dialogue as well. I stood there mouthing along, like I might fool them if I just kept moving my lips."

But there was no fooling Steve Spielberg when he saw Lewis in 'Hamlet' on Broadway. The great director immediately recognised Lewis's massive talent and cast him in the lead role as US Army Major Richard Winters in the magnificent WW2 epic 'Band Of Brothers', which made him a star.

'Band Of Brothers' led to two years' more work in America when Lewis starred as Charlie Crews in the crime drama 'Life', the story of a detective released from prison after serving 12 years for a crime he did not commit. And that led to Lewis landing the role of Marine Sergeant Nicholas Brody in 'Homeland', which earned him an Emmy, a Golden Globe and made him front-page news.

The success of 'Homeland' – in which Lewis played a prisoner-of-war 'turned' to become a threat to the United States after torture by al-Qaeda – gripped viewers around the world and its fans included President Obama and Prince William.

The Prince revealed that he and Kate were big fans of the thriller when he presented Lewis with the OBE for services to drama last year. So too is the President, who told Lewis so when, to his astonishment, he and his wife, actress Helen McCrory, found themselves sitting opposite him at a White House dinner.

"We went down the South Lawn into the marquee and we were looking for Table 20, we thought we'd be sitting by the toilets or something," said Lewis.

"But it turned out that we were sitting directly opposite the President at his table. We were sort of like guests of honour, it was surreal. I actually pinched myself, digging into my thigh under the table, because I couldn't believe it was happening.

"I asked him when he had time to watch TV. He said, 'on Saturday afternoons when Michelle and the kids go off to play tennis, I go into the Oval Office and watch Homeland'."

It is striking that such an utter Englishman as Lewis – who was born in St John's Wood, is the son of a London stockbroker, the grandson of former Lord Mayor of London Sir Ian Bowater and was schooled at Eton – has had such huge TV success playing Americans.

From 'Band Of Brothers' – for which he was sent to a boot camp for 10 days to train as a soldier, waking at five every morning for a five-mile run – through 'Life' and 'Homeland', Lewis has become so identified as American that even the natives think he is one.

"I spend more of my working life speaking in an American accent," he said. "So much so that when some people meet me off the set over there they say 'you've got a really bad English accent'."

"I'm not surprised that Damian has fooled most Americans that he's one of them, he's a fantastic mimic," said Christopher Menaul, who directed Lewis in one of his occasional actually-English roles, as Soames in 'The Forsythe Saga'.

With typical modesty, Lewis says his success as an American has been 'a fluke'; although he does admit that being a bit of a musician - before acting he spent his summers busking in the South of France - may have something to do with it.

"I just slipped through the net with Band Of Brothers and subsequently got to play a lot of Americans, I've just been very lucky," he said.

"But then accents are about musicality and if you're lucky enough to have a small amount of musicality, you hear inflexions and tones and that helps. Accents aren't so much about making the perfect vowel sounds, they are more about rhythms and inflexions and if you can get those right you've got more of a chance."

He is now a massive star and is about to become even bigger; BBC insiders are already tipping Lewis for a BAFTA for his said-to-be-outstanding performance as Henry VIII and with new movies out this year – with Nicole Kidman in 'Queen Of The Desert' and with Ewan McGregor in John le Carre's 'Our Kind Of Traitor – it can only be a matter of a short while before he deservedly wins an Oscar.

But despite his engorging fame, he's very much still a London lad; often popping in for a pint at his local in Tufnell Park and travelling across town on the Tube, just as he used to each day when, with no acting roles, he worked as a car alarm salesman.

"I simply refuse not to use the Tube just because I might get bothered by people," he said.

"I'm resolved to use public transport because London's my town and it always has been, I feel very proprietorial about it."

● *Wolf Hall starts on BBC2 on Wednesday Jan 21st. American Buffalo opens at Wyndham's Theatre on April 16th.*

GUESTS AT THE WHITE HOUSE: Damian Lewis and his wife Helen McCrory arriving for dinner with President Obama

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WINE & DINE

The food and drink page for West London

Grab a bargain bottle in January

DRY January; that cold, dark month when, thanks to the extra pounds we've piled on over Christmas and the almighty hangover we woke up with on New Year's Day, many of us decide giving up the booze is a good idea.

But don't worry if you don't agree. As the credit card bills come rolling in, the temperature makes us shiver and the damp weather makes us want to curl up in a ball and stay there until spring, there's a lot to be said for a comforting glass of something naughty.

After all, with that New Year exercise resolution, you'll be blitzing any calories you might consume.

Oh, and what's more, because so many people do cut back on buying bottles in January, you're guaranteed a bargain - you can even buy a lovely drop with that dirty old fiver your Aunty Ingrid sent you in her Christmas card...

BEST BUY

If you really want to stock up for winter, snap up this case of wonderful wines, pictured below, at 20 per cent less than the normal price. Containing two bottles of Black Stump Durif Shiraz 2014, two Visionario IGT Venezie 13s, a couple of bottles of Posada del Rey Tinto NV (2013), two Campanula Pinot Grigio 13s, two Don Cayetano Sauvignon Blanc 2013 delights and two bottles of the very delicious Pillastro Primitivo 2013, the Laithwaite's Sale Bestsellers case works out at £77.88 - £6.49 a bottle (www.laithwaites.co.uk).

REDS

Warm and hearty, a large red is like a cuddle in a glass - almost medicinal for those January blues.

● **The Exquisite Collection Valpolicella Ripasso Superiore, £7.99, Aldi**
Aged for three years in French oak barriques, this flavoursome red has rich cherry fruit, Victoria plum flavours and the slightest hint of bitter almonds. And although not on offer, Aldi boasts an impressive set of bargains year-round. Available in store only.

● **Peter Lehmann The Pastor's Son Shiraz 2009, £7.99 (reduced from £15.99), Laithwaite's Wine (www.laithwaites.co.uk)**
Smooth, rich, plummy, chocolatey - it's everything you want from a red wine in January, complete with a 50% off price tag. Delicious.

● **The Venturer Series Old Vines Garnacha, £4.79, Aldi**
A real wintry treat that's easy on the wallet, this red is made from grenache grapes harvested from old vines in the high vineyards of Spain's Carinena region. It's full-bodied, laden with sensuous strawberry compote and finished off with a lick of vanilla oak. Available in store only.

● **Hardys 160 Year Anniversary Shiraz, £6.66 (reduced from £9.99), Waitrose (www.waitrose.com)**
A famous name, a sexy bottle and a limited edition drop - it can only mean good things. Soft and full-bodied, with plums, blueberries and a warm, sweet, lingering finish - it's got 'Saturday night in' written all over it.

WHITES

Opening a crisp, clean bottle of white welcomes the onset of spring. OK, we're not quite there yet, but these bargain buys will help you along the way...

● **Sunday Bay Sauvignon Blanc 2014, £7.99 (reduced from £11.99), Laithwaite's Wine (www.laithwaites.co.uk)**
Coming from the New World capital for sauvignon blanc, this drop is almost bound to be a hit. Fresh, tropical, exuberant and zesty, it makes you want to dance.

● **Italian Gavi, £6 (reduced from £7.29), Spar**
The steep slopes of the Piemonte hills are home to the locally grown cortese grape that produces this unique and award-winning Gavi. Boasting zesty citrus fruit and lightly floral characters, it's well-balanced and pleases most palates. Available in store only.

● **LaVis Vigneti di Montagna Pinot Grigio, £6.66 (reduced from £9.99), Waitrose (www.waitrose.com)**
Containing hand-harvested grapes from vineyards on the slopes of the Dolomite foothills, this wine feels like it's been cared for. The bouquet is elegant and complex, with hints of pear and apple, while the palate is dry - it's a refreshing smacker on the lips.

● **Chapel Hill Chardonnay 2014, £7.99 (reduced from £12.99), Laithwaite's Wine (www.laithwaites.co.uk)**
If you haven't got back into the Chardonnay trend yet, make 2015 the year you do. This contemporary Aussie number is deliciously ripe and mouth-watering, thanks to a spicy complexity and white peach kiss. A winner with a chicken dinner.

BUBBLES

No need to be saved for special occasions, a glass of sparkle cheers any winter weekend. Certainly, with prices this good, there's no need to wait...

● **Adeletto Prosecco Superiore, £6.99 (reduced from £10.49), Co-operative**
This wonderfully cut-price Prosecco is dry, fresh and delicate, with a citrus hit to perk up your winter woes. Available in store only.

● **Donacella Cava Brut, £6, (reduced from £7.99), Spar**
A Decanter Bronze Award Winner 2014, the persisting bubbles contained within this bottle of pop will raise a smile. With apples, pears and a slight nutty finish, it's an easy drinker and perfect with a healthy grilled fish supper. In store only.

MARK HIX'S RECIPE OF THE WEEK

Braised Ox cheeks with port and turnips

TO go with the ox cheeks in this dish, it's best if you can find small turnips with their leaves; you can then cut the leaves off, cook them briefly and scatter them over with the turnips. The leaves have a great flavour and it seems a shame to just throw them in the bin.

Serves 4

800g ox cheeks, halved if large
2 glasses of good red wine
1 clove of garlic, peeled and crushed
1tsp chopped thyme
1 bay leaf
Vegetable oil for frying
30g butter
1 small onion, peeled and chopped
½tbsp plain flour
1½ltrs beef stock (a couple of good cubes will do)
1tsp tomato purée
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
150ml port
16 baby turnips or 3-4 medium sized ones, peeled

A couple of days before you make this dish, put the ox cheeks into a non-reactive bowl with the red wine, garlic, thyme and bay leaf. Cover with clingfilm and marinate in the fridge. When you're ready to make the dish, drain the meat in a colander, reserving the marinade, and dry the cheeks on some kitchen paper.

Heat the vegetable oil in a heavy-bottomed frying pan, lightly flour the meat with half a tablespoon of the flour, season with salt and pepper and fry the meat on a high heat until nicely browned.

Heat the butter in a large, heavy-bottomed saucepan and gently fry the onion for a few minutes until soft. Add the remaining tablespoon of flour and tomato purée and stir over a low heat for a minute. Slowly add the marinade, stirring constantly to avoid lumps forming. Bring to the boil and simmer until it has reduced by half. Add the beef stock and the pieces of beef, bring back to the boil, cover with a lid and simmer gently for about 2-2½ hours, until the meat is tender and the sauce thick. If you have a pressure cooker it will be ready in half the time.

It's difficult to put an exact time on braised meats, sometimes an extra half an hour's cooking may be necessary. Check by tasting the meat. Once it's cooked, the sauce should have thickened to a gravy-like consistency. If not, dilute a little cornflour in some water, stir into the sauce and simmer for a few minutes.

While the meat is cooking, if using baby or small turnips, you can cook them whole without peeling them; with larger ones, simply peel and cut them into wedges or large chunks. Cook them in boiling salted water, just enough to cover with a teaspoon of sugar for about 5 minutes, or until just cooked. Drain, stir in the butter, cover with a lid and keep warm.

To serve, add the port to the beef and simmer for a few more minutes. Spoon the cheeks on to warmed serving plates or a sharing dish and spoon the turnips on top.

Stars speak out for Barnardo's

London celebrities rolling back the years to support fostering campaign

FAY Ripley, Andy Serkis, and Linda Robson are among London-based stars who have braved the days of acne and dodgy haircuts to release candid photos of themselves as adolescents. Barnardo's approached celebrities for their 'unseen' teen pics as part of a new campaign to recruit more foster carers in the UK.

A number of personalities have sent through informal snaps of themselves in their teen years. They also include Dame Joan Collins with her family; I'm A Celebrity Get Me Out of Here winner Christopher Biggins in hippy garb; and the late Lynda Bellingham playing Puck in a teenage production of A Midsummer's Night Dream.

The celebs have also shared pearls of wisdom passed down by their family for Barnardo's Fostering Week 2015 which launches today. Along with her poignant photo, the late Lynda Bellingham's husband Michael Pattemore reveals that Lynda's motto was always 'Live Life to the Full'. He says Lynda's maxim, is the best advice you could give any young person.

Barnardo's is looking to recruit foster carers in 2015 to help address a shortfall of 1,025 carers in London (8,600 nationally). The charity is asking members of the public to consider becoming foster carers and help create happy childhood memories for some of the most vulnerable children in the UK.

Some of the advice given to our teenage celebrities included:

Fay Ripley: "My mum used to tell me that the world is making room for you but don't forget there is always a room at home waiting"

Linda Robson: "My mum told me to always treat others as you wish to be treated, with respect"

Tim Lovejoy: "My dad told me that if you never do anything bad, you can go to bed every night without worries"

Barnardo's CEO Javed Khan said:

■ ANDY Serkis, above, Ripley, right, and Linda Robson, below, with their younger selves

"Most of us can remember the advice and support we received from our family growing up. Without the right foster family to care for them, many vulnerable children in London may never experience the kind of love and stability we take for granted.

"Currently a third of all children in foster care are moved between different families more than twice every year due to the lack of suitable foster carers. The number of children in the care system in the UK has risen for the 8th year in a row to more than 90,000 and at least 8,600 new foster carers are needed in the UK.

"It is a critical situation and Barnardo's is looking for people with patience and commitment to provide a stable home for the most vulnerable children in London. Fostering is a caring career and I would encourage those who feel they have a lot of love to give to get in touch."

Brenda Blethyn OBE, who is also supporting the campaign, said: "I am a long-term supporter of Barnardo's and their fostering services. The work foster carers do is invaluable, as they offer vulnerable children and young people a stable, safe and caring home, sometimes for the first time in their lives.

"Although it is a demanding role, it is very rewarding and we desperately need more potential foster carers to come forward for children waiting for a family. That is why I'm taking part in this year's National Fostering and Adoption Week."

There is no upper age limit although there is a minimum age of 21. Barnardo's does not exclude anyone from consideration on the grounds of marital status, gender, sexual orientation, disability or employment status. Barnardo's is keen to speak to individuals from the BME and LGBT communities who are interested in fostering

Using the celebrity pictures, Barnardo's will be staging projection stunts throughout the week (12 – 18 January 2014), on the busiest high streets in Edinburgh (12th), Newcastle (13th) and Cardiff (14th).

Follow the @Barnardos campaign on twitter using the hashtag #WhyFoster and share your teen pictures and family advice.

To find out more about fostering visit www.barnardos.org.uk/fostering or call 08000 277 280

Donate your unwanted gifts to Barnardo's says Shirley Bassey

LONG term supporter of Barnardo's Dame Shirley Bassey regularly donates to their shops and is appealing for people in London to take their unwanted Christmas gifts to their nearest store.

The items sold will raise vital funds for its work with some of the most disadvantaged children and families in the UK.

Some of the top items Dame Shirley Bassey has donated to Barnardo's have included designer handbags and shoes.

Speaking about the appeal she said:

"Now that the festivities are over I urge people in London to look at any presents they received this Christmas which they know they won't use. There are many vulnerable young people across the UK who are desperately in need of Barnardo's valuable support, and by donating to their stores you can be a part of making that happen."

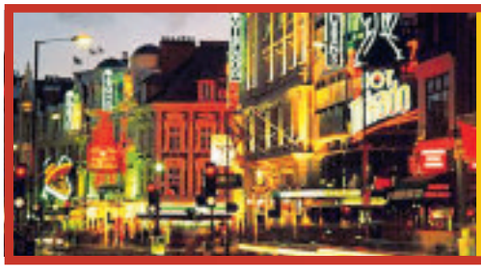
The most popular items Barnardo's receives after Christmas are often scarves, seasonal woolly jumper (or clothing), Toiletry gift sets, DVDs, CDs and other household items.

Barnardo's Chief Executive Javed Khan said: "Barnardo's stores are dependent upon the public's kind donations and our profits go directly into our work with some of the UK's most vulnerable children and young people.

"If you receive a gift at Christmas that you know you won't use then please think of Barnardo's and how your item can be enjoyed by someone else whilst benefiting the children who need it most."

Barnardo's can find a customer for all unwanted gifts that are donated. And as it is estimated that over £2.4 billion worth of unwanted presents are regularly received at Christmas, with a third of these ending up gathering dust in the back of a cupboard or loft, recycling is always a good option.

Donations can be made at one of Barnardo's 573 stores nationwide.



TALK OF THE TOWN

MUSIC ★ THEATRE ★ PUBS

The entertainment scene in West London

The London pub that launches the stars

By Geoff Baker

FOR 50 years it's been the best gig in town; the tiny West London rock venue, adored by musicians, that has helped break bands from the Stones, The Who and Van Morrison to U2, Kate Bush and Ed Sheeran.

And now as it works into its second half-century the legendary Half Moon at Putney is busier and more rocking than ever, hosting more than 700 new artists a year and always looking for that band that will become the next headliner at Glastonbury.

The pub which has become an institution in the music business only has capacity for 200 a night – but last year more than 35,000 fans made the trek over Putney Bridge to the venue that is London's No 1 shrine for live music.

While other venues sadly close and fade away, the lure of the loud regular crowd and a sound system reckoned to be the best in the capital keeps the new bands coming – for they know that The Half Moon is the place that breaks the unknown acts who become tomorrow's stars.

Much fancied to be The Half Moon's latest success are The MonaLisa Twins who will play their first London show at the pub next Thursday (January 22nd).

The Twins, Mona and Lisa Wagner, have caught the attention on BBC producers and DJs and record company A&R scouts for their very Lennon & McCartney sounding, but completely original songs, which they have been honing in a residency at the birthplace of The Beatles, Liverpool's Cavern Club.

■ MonaLisa Twins

The pub gig is expected to be packed out for the 20-year-old sisters' London debut, not least because of their 22,000 Facebook fan club and a coach-load of 70 Scousers who are coming down from Liverpool for the show.

Another favourite tipped to join the Half Moon's hall of fame is singer-songwriter Mollie Marriott, the daughter of the late great Small Faces leader Steve Marriott, who also played at the Half Moon in his day.

■ Mollie Marriott

Mollie, who first sang onstage at the age of 12, will play The Half Moon on February 23rd. As she has already worked with admirers Liam Gallagher, Paul Weller, Zac Starkey and Ron Wood, there could be famous faces in the crowd.

The great thing about The Half Moon is going there to guess who among the unknowns is going to break big. Back in the 60s regulars were spoiled for choice as The Rolling Stones, The Yardbirds, John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, Fairport Convention, Van Morrison, Roy Harper and John Martyn all started out here.

Later, Dr Feelgood and kd Lang made their name with crowd-crazing gigs at the pub, which was Kate Bush's choice of venue for her first ever public appearance. For U2, the Half Moon also has a special place in their hearts as it was here, on their first UK visit, that the now-superstars sold out their first show.

Godmother to all of the bands since the Nineties is the pub's much-loved and widely-respected venue manager Carrie Davies. She has seen it all and still fondly recalls the struggle they had to get Keith Richards and Ron Wood to stop playing pool and get onstage when the Stones returned to their old stamping ground for a private gig in 2000.

Incredible night

"That was an incredible night; I was so sworn to secrecy that I couldn't even tell the staff who was playing," said Carrie, who started at the Half Moon in 1997.

From January 26th to February 1st, Carrie will be overseeing The Half Moon's part in Independent Venue Week, the seven-day celebration of small music venues and the people who run them.

Independent venues are where new talent gets the chance to shine and catch the eye of the next Brian Epstein or Oasis-finder Alan McGee, whom you never know might be in the crowd.

"Venues like the Half Moon give artists their first experience of playing live in front of an audience and for fans they are somewhere to get up close to artists that one day may be playing stadiums or the festival main stages," said a spokesman for the week that will be championing 85 indy venues across the UK.

"Independent music venues are an invaluable part of our national music ecology," said Helen Sprott, director of Music at Arts Council England.

"They are often the places where people across England first experience live music and for many years these venues have also provided the vascular system by which artists have been able to tour the nation.

"It is this dual role, nurturing both audiences and talent, that sits at the heart of Independent Venue Week and we are delighted to be supporting this celebration of grassroots music through our Grants for the Arts programme."

Further support from the independent music industry has come from PRS for Music, UK Music and The Musicians Union.

"We're delighted to be backing Independent Venue Week for a second year," said PRS head of marketing Paul Sims.

"These venues are the lifeblood of the live music scene and our many members who perform there. Up and down the country night after night, they provide a crucial platform to new and breaking acts to hone their stagecraft and to try out the songs they have written in front of an audience of live music fans."

"Independent Venues Week is the most amazing opportunity for small venues and I feel very honoured that The Half Moon is included," said Carrie.

Hard work

"Small venues face battles every day; it takes so much hard work and luck just to break even in the business, so to have this helping hand is fantastic.

"Playing live is crucial for bands at all stages of their career. It encourages creativity within a band too. It's great for an act to play around with different versions of their songs and it's good for the group as playing live keeps it exciting.

"Gigs create a relationship between the bands and their fans, to see bands and fans interact at a live gig is what it's all about for me. Live shows help create faithful fans and faithful fans bring the money in, so these days playing live is very important financially for bands at all levels."

Besides the night that the Stones came back, Carrie's most memorable gigs at the Half Moon include Kate Bush's debut and the start-out shows of another then-unknown who made good, Elvis Costello.

"Elvis had a residency here that earned him a plate of sarnies and 50p a gig," said Carrie.

"Another favourite was the night that Kasabian blew the roof off in 2006. And then there was an unknown Ed Sheeran who played a support show here – and almost every single person came up to us on the door afterwards to ask who he was."

That was back in 2008. Few music fans will need reminding that this year Ed Sheeran will play three nights at Wembley Stadium at the end of his huge, 50-gig, 21-nation world tour.

Who knows if Wembley will follow for the new bands showcasing at The Half Moon for Independent Venues Week? Among the artists appearing at the rock pub on the week's opening night on the 26th will be Ella James, named as one of Glastonbury's Emerging Talents of 2013, the exceptional guitarist Ollie Clark, and newly-tipped folk-blues singer-songwriter Sam Jones.

Meanwhile watch out for the January 29th release of the limited edition Live From The Half Moon album. Only 1,500 copies of the CD will be released, featuring 13 bands including Dr Feelgood and Eddie & The Hotrods. All profits will go to the Nordoff Robbins music therapy charity.

● **www.halfmoon.co.uk 93 Lower Richmond Road SW15 1EU**

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The Voice returns - with added Rita

New coach Rita Ora takes her place alongside The Voice UK veterans Sir Tom Jones, Will.i.am and Ricky Wilson, as Series 4 kicks off on BBC1.

I am nervous about people watching me on the show," Rita Ora says, speaking at the launch of The Voice UK's new series.

"People have one perception of me: they see my music videos, but they may not know the real me. So yeah it's intimidating, because this is like I am giving myself to the viewing public.

"I'm going to watch it with my family…" she smiles, looking just a little concerned.

Having only just joined The Voice UK coaching panel, Rita has already decided that performing in front of a crowd of thousands isn't as hard as trying to spot talent during the blind auditions.

"I'd rather be on stage for three hours, singing and sweating, than sitting in that chair for more than seven hours!" she laughs.

"You just never know what's about to happen. But I love that – it's a completely different adrenalin rush."

Aside from her (reported) six-figure paycheck from the BBC, Rita had personal motivations for taking her place in the big red chair – and turning down Simon Cowell's offer to be an X-Factor judge.

"I agreed to do this show because I believe in what it stands for. I like the natural process of the show; everything seems really real and I love the fact that the artists can actually sing. I respect the coaches, and I was a fan of the show. I also wanted to help, because there was someone who really helped me with my career. A person who really believed in me – and I want to be that person for someone else," she says.

Her fellow coach and the panel's most flamboyant dresser, Will.i.am also feels a personal responsibility to The Voice contestants.

Like Rita, who said that the awkward situation when none of the judges spin their chairs for a singer "took some getting used to," Will empathises with people auditioning for the show.

THE JUDGES: Ricky Wilson, Tom Jones, Will.i.am and newcomer Rita Ora, concentrating on the performances

"I know what it is like to have a door slammed in my face. I know what it feels like to be rejected, and the fact that the rejection is coming from me now: that hurts. I don't ever want to be the door slammer for someone. After four years doing it, it still hurts me every time that happens," he says.

Looking back to the beginning of his super successful career, the record producer and Black Eyed Peas star also reveals that "I wouldn't have gone on The Voice, because I'm not the right kind of artist. You can't judge me on my vocals, you judge me on my mind, and the ideas I come up with. But this show doesn't highlight your ideas, it is about your ability to sing other people's ideas."

As one of the most innovative people in showbiz (he's sent a song to Mars, and has his own line of technology products) Will thinks he knows why The Voice is yet to produce a mega popstar like rival show The X Factor, which has churned out successful acts over the past decade.

"It's down to this instant gratification culture we have now. We don't have the attention or patience to see someone evolve as an artist, after the show is finished."

Fellow coach Ricky Wilson agrees that The Voice is more about long term pop success: "I'm still in touch with everyone from my team from last year, and they are all playing bigger gigs now.

"Beth McCarthy didn't even get to the final, but she's above established artists on festival bills this summer. She's doing it the old-fashioned way, but with a little bit of a turbo boost from being on The Voice. I'm proud of her!"

Living legend Sir Tom Jones has witnessed his contestants developing in the same way.

"I took (2014 finalist) Sally Barker out on tour with me last summer: this woman had retired; she thought her career was over, and this show brought her back to life," he says.

"The people who enter The X-Factor are all about commercial success; the people that come on The Voice don't really care about that. Because they want to side-swerve that whole scenario of 'you're the next big thing, until the next big thing'," says Ricky.

"We're not just trying to find a flash-in-the-pan star to fill the void between the series."

Sir Tom adds a final note, his signature gravelly tones silencing the room.

"Ultimately, the feedback we get from contestants is that they want to be judged on their voices, not the way they look or dance. Real singers want to be heard."

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Redknapp offers no case for his defence

LOFTUS ROAD RANGERS REVIEW

THROUGH gritted teeth and barely concealed anger, Harry Redknapp bemoaned "two horrendous goals" as QPR slumped to a 2-1 defeat to fellow strugglers Burnley at Turf Moor on Saturday.

Strikes by Arfield and Ings, either side of a Charlie Austin penalty, saw Rangers drop perilously back into the bottom three.

Apart from the result, which leaves R's only one place and two points ahead of basement dwellers Leicester City, there were heated words exchanged between a small group of travelling fans and QPR players Richard Dunne and Clint Hill at the final whistle.

Dunne, Joey Barton and Mauricio Isla were all guilty of weak defending as Arfield breezed past them to score his solo effort and, along with fellow centre-back Steven Caulker, the former Republic of Ireland international was also at fault for Ings' winner.

"For the first goal we have got three men around their guy," said an exasperated Redknapp. "We are not talking about Lionel Messi, are we? He has gone past three of us far too easily.

"The second goal was shocking and it has cost us dearly. The ball has dropped between two of our defenders (Caulker and Dunne) and we had to clear the ball. You cannot give goals like that away and win football matches."

Unhappy Harry Redknapp slammed his defenders Pic: Rob Newell/Digital South

QPR have become the first team to lose their first 10 away games of a top flight season since Sunderland in 1964-65. They have failed to keep a clean sheet in their last 18 on the road.

Equally worrying, several of their near neighbours on Skid Row are improving. Two – Crystal Palace and West Brom – are now winning under newly-appointed managers, while Leicester have looked anything but the worst side in the PL with three wins and a draw in their last four, including a 2-2 at Liverpool. Leicester now resemble a rejuvenated tramp who has had enough of looking up from the gutter.

The surprise inclusion of Adel Taarabt, after three months in the wilderness, was one of few bright points at Burnley as Redknapp explained the selection of the mercurial Moroccan he had previously criticised for being three stone over-weight: "Playing Adel was a gamble but I was pleased with him," he said.

"He's only been fit this week, he trained well and I wanted to try something different.

"I thought he worked hard and showed glimpses of what he's undoubtedly capable of but we didn't use him as much as we could have."

Redknapp feels his side, who were promoted through the play-offs last season, are short of quality compared to some of their relegation rivals.

"I keep saying that seven or eight of my team were playing last season in the Championship and finished miles behind Burnley and Leicester. We are down there and scrapping away with them but they were miles in front of us last year."

Last week QPR brought in forward Mauro Zarate on loan from West Ham until the end of the season. The Argentine, who scored twice in eight appearances since joining the Hammers in the summer, is eager to prove a point after being given just five starts by West Ham boss Sam Allardyce. Many West Ham fans have complained via social media that their manager has made a mistake by loaning him out.

Stocky, solid and skilful, 28-year-old Zarate can be effective in the No.10 role as a creative force but it would be asking too much to expect him to score the goals that can lift R's clear of the drop zone.

"We need to get Mauro up to speed and get his fitness up, that is the key for him," added Redknapp, who gave the little Argentine his debut as a 76th minute sub for Eduardo Vargas at Burnley.

"I have not got a lot of options – I've only got two strikers at the club, Bobby Zamora and Charlie Austin.

"Bobby couldn't train on Friday because his back was sore, so I took a gamble, threw Adel in and I thought he did OK.

"I'm looking to strengthen but we are only looking at loans – if we can find one."

Charlie Austin scored 41 goals in 69 league starts for Burnley before moving to QPR in 2013 but his former club's fans reacted angrily when he went down under Marney's challenge, even though it looked a clear-cut decision for referee Andre Marriner.

England's leading PL scorer with 13, Austin – who hit a post before his equaliser at Burnley – will be looking to extend his tally against Manchester United at Loftus Road this Saturday.

Matic banishes away day blues

THE need for Chelsea to reassert themselves away from Stamford Bridge will be tested at Swansea City on Saturday. One man up for the task is the impressive man mountain Nemanja Matic (above).

The 6ft 4in tall Serbia midfielder, a £21m signing from Benfica, is one of many Blues to shine this season.

I caught up with him in the tunnel at the Bridge after the Newcastle win. Holding the hand of his shy, young son, who cowered behind his dad, Matic was adamant that the away day Blues are firmly in the past.

"The first half against Newcastle wasn't very good for us," he said.

"They controlled the game but in the second-half we played our game, we controlled the 45 minutes, scored the second goal and killed the game. If we look at the Newcastle game as a whole we have to be happy, because we got three points."

What do you have to do away from home to match your dominance at the Bridge?

"We have to play like we always do at Stamford Bridge. When we play away it's more difficult because we have to cope with the opposition fans more, the support is greater for the other team. It's like they have 12 players on the pitch.

"We know it is not possible to win every game we play but we are first in the table and have to continue like this.

"Our tactics have to depend on the opponent. We always try to play the same way as always. Sometimes it's possible, sometimes not. It can depend on the other team too."

Would he prefer to play against a passing side like Swansea City or ones that like to park the bus and defend deep?

"Swansea are very difficult to play against," he said.

"They have many good players and it's always very hard to play against them. We expect a hard game there, we know they have a lot of quality. We will try to play our game in the best way and have to use our quality.

"It's going to be difficult, for sure. Before the game you never know what is going to happen."

Paul Lagan

Blue & White In Brief

■ **DOMINIC Solanke, one of Chelsea's hottest youth prospects, has been named England Men's Youth Player of the Year.**

The winner of the award is chosen by the coaches, and Solanke was rewarded following an impressive 12-month period.

The 17-year-old was an integral part of the England Under-17 side that were crowned European champions in May, with Solanke finishing the tournament as joint-top scorer, while he was also named UEFA's Star of 2014.

He has been a regular for Blues' U21s and U19s this season and scored a brace in the U21s' 3-2 defeat at Manchester City last week.

■ **QPR Under-21s endured a miserable start to 2015 following last week's 7-2 defeat to Crystal Palace.**

Second-half strikes from Reece Grego-Cox and Osman Kakay was scant consolation in south London, where Rangers paid a heavy price for a series of individual errors.

Ferrier hit a hat-trick for Palace, whose three goals in the opening six minutes after half-time at Tooting & Mitcham's KNK Stadium all but ended the afternoon as a contest.

QPR: Lennox, Furlong, Meade, Comley, Wise (Kakay 54), Laurent, Gibbons (Mulraney 58), Anau, Grego-Cox (Shodipo 68), Mitchell, Dago.

● **RUGBY UNION**

Chiswick... 10

Hammersmith & Fulham... 5

Hammer blow

HAMMERSMITH and Fulham made the short trip down the river to face local rivals Chiswick on Saturday but lost a tight game by five points.

With the wind blowing directly up and down the pitch, it was never going to be an afternoon of free-flowing rugby.

Hammers started playing into the wind and handled conditions well, opting to keep possession and work their way up the field. Midway through the first half, the ball worked its way wide and James Lo handed his man off and then powered his way through the last tackle to open the scoring.

Hammers skipper James Smart hopes to lead his team back to winning ways.

The visitors maintained their lead until late on in the first-half, when soft penalties allowed Chiswick to kick for the corner. And while Hammers' defence had been solid, Chiswick took their opportunity with a rolling maul to go over and score.

With the wind at their backs in the second-half, Hammers began well, using the conditions to work their field position. However, the Chiswick full-back played very well and was able to counter-attack to keep the pressure on.

Likewise, the Chiswick midfield was solid in defence to repel Hammers' strike runners, so second half momentum swung both ways.

Chiswick's scrum began to get the upper hand, which cost Hammers good field position and possession. The home side were able to make these opportunities count and worked an overlap well, with their 15 breaking the line to offload in the tackle and create their second try.

Although Hammers continued to chase the game, they came up short. Set pieces couldn't provide the platform to go forward and opportunities were wasted.

H&F hope to get back to winning ways when St Albans visit Hurlingham Park on Saturday.

**** Hammersmith and Fulham is always keen to welcome new players to the club, particularly front-row forwards. Training is at Hurlingham Park on Tuesday and Thursday nights from 7.30pm. For more information visit www.fulhamrugby.co.uk***

FOOTBALL FIXTURES

Saturday, January 17
Swansea City v CHELSEA, 3.00.
QPR v Manchester Utd, 3.00.
FULHAM v Reading, 3.00.
FULHAM U18 v Norwich City U18, 12.00.
Monday, January 19
WBA U18 v CHELSEA U18, 12.00.
Tuesday, January 20
Liverpool v CHELSEA, Capital One Cup SF1, 7.45.
Wednesday, January 21
FULHAM U21 v PSV Eindhoven U21, 7.00.

London Weekly News

SPORT

Thursday, January 15th, 2015 ● SPORTS DESK: 07711 169 427

Jose Mourinho was unusually speechless before and after Saturday's win Pic: Rob Newell/Digital South

FA silence Mourinho

JOSE Mourinho is breathing a sigh of relief this week. He may find himself a few grand out of pocket soon, though, having being charged by the FA regarding comments implying that referees are being influenced to make decisions against his team.

● By LWN reporter **Paul Lagan**
sport@londonweeklynews.co.uk

But that monetary punishment will be far outweighed by the return of a clean sheet and Saturday's 2-0 league win at home to Newcastle United.

Mourinho had until Tuesday to respond to the FA charge of misconduct. The FA said: "It is alleged his (Mourinho) remarks constitute improper conduct in that they allege and/or imply bias on the part of a referee or referees and/or bring the game into disrepute."

Within half an hour of that charge being announced last Thursday, Chelsea's hierarchy pulled him out of the firing line by withdrawing the Portuguese from attending media duties ahead of Saturday's match.

A club spokesman told me he would not return until the charge had being resolved.

Now from a PR point of view, that would on the surface be a sensible thing to do – no point in adding fire to the flames sort of thing.

But supporters really don't want to hear the words and wisdom of assistant first team coach Steve Holland, do they? Steve's a lovely guy, a smart cookie in his own right, who in due course will get his chance at being a number one at a club.

But the assembled hacks at the training ground on Friday and those at the Bridge on Saturday were certainly not looking forward to hearing him.

So It was no surprise at the paucity of column inches afforded Holland on Saturday by the national press – Mourinho *is* the news, it's a simple as that. No Mourinho, no mention of Chelsea. Who ultimately gets short-changed? The fans, of course.

I have to say I'm surprised that Mourinho was charged by the FA. Had he not had 'previous' with them, I doubt they would have bothered.

But he had just been formally warned for comments he made about referee Neil Swarbrick, suggesting that the man in the middle needed to "produce a strong performance" ahead of the away match on December 22 at Stoke City, which Chelsea went on to win comfortably 2-0.

"Having sought his observations on this matter, the FA has decided not to bring a disciplinary charge and instead issued him with a formal warning," the pompous FA said.

They added: "The FA prohibit participants from making any pre-match media comments, including comments of a positive nature concerning the appointed match officials for a particular fixture."

It seems managers, not just Mourinho, cannot win when it comes to mentioning referees. The hand-wringing of frustration by those in charge at Chelsea at the notion that Mourinho cannot make a positive comment about a referee was made loud and clear to me on Saturday. I have a degree of sympathy at this. Don't we all want players and officials alike to have a strong performance? We want the fans to have a strong performance, supporting their team through thick and thin. We want our media to be strong too.

It seems the only ones prohibiting this are the adjudicators – the FA.

This week at STAMFORD BRIDGE

ZOUMA MAKES LEAGUE BOW

WITH Manchester City drawing 1-1 at Everton, Chelsea took advantage and restored some air between them at the helm of the Premier League thanks to goals from Oscar and Diego Costa which saw off a spirited Newcastle United and gave Blues a two-point lead over their title rivals.

That clean sheet, added to the one when they defeated Watford 3-0 in the FA Cup, has done wonders for the confidence of the players.

On Saturday, Kurt Zouma made his first start in the League for the Blues. He replaced Gary Cahill who had being out of sorts since sustaining a head injury against Spurs at the Bridge back in early December.

The 20-year-old French centre-back was impressive and was rightly lauded by Holland after the game.

"The club gets a lot of stick for not giving young players a go," he said.

"And Kurt Zouma is 20 years of age. That's not his first appearance of the season. And he was immaculate. We all have belief in him but ultimately, as the leader and the manager ,Jose has to make the decisions. He showed great faith in him by starting him. And that faith was repaid – I thought his performance was immaculate. I can't think of anything he did wrong."

That's all true, of course, but for Holland to feel the need to say that Chelsea shouldn't get stick for not giving youth a chance doesn't stand up to scrutiny.

The club has farmed out yet more youngsters to Championship sides already in January.

Dominic Solanke and Rubén Loftus-Cheek have both had a few minutes' action at Champions League level earlier this season. But in one game, the match was already won and in another, it was a dead rubber groups stage encounter of no significance.

As for Zouma, yep, he is 20, but he did cost Chelsea £12.5m from French side St Etienne last January. He's hardly a youth team product.

It would be a major surprise if England defender Cahill is not restored to the starting line-up when Blues travel to Liverpool next Tuesday for the first leg of the Capital One Cup semi-final.

■ NEMANJA MATIC ON SWANSEA – p27

Focus on Craven Cottage

Whites draw another blank

GOAL-shy Fulham go to Reading on Saturday bidding to end a barren run of three consecutive league defeats without scoring.

After 2-0 losses against Bournemouth and Brighton – plus a goalless draw with Wolves in the FA Cup ahead of Tuesday's replay – Whites' manager Kit Symons left the Cardiff City Stadium on Saturday unhappy that his side could not convert their possession into goals after the hosts claimed a 1-0 victory.

Sean Morrison's 14th minute goal was all that separated the sides in south Wales and Symons wants to see his players start hitting the target rather than playing the extra pass.

"We had very good possession, over 60 per cent, but didn't create enough clear-cut opportunities," Symons said.

"There needs to be an end product from all of that possession and we didn't really have it.

"We've got a lot of creative players and we made changes and brought on more creative players who have got a real forward threat.

"But I think we need to be a little more speculative. Rather than score that perfect goal, we need to get more shots away."

The moment which clinched all three points for the Bluebirds came from a launched throw-in from Aron Gunnarsson, a predictable set play that Symons was well aware of.

"We know they've got some big lads and set plays were going to be very important and, overall, we probably defended them OK apart from one long throw. And that proved to be the decisive moment," he continued.

"They scored the goal against Charlton the other week using the long throw, so it is a weapon and they use it well.

Encroaching on pitch

"He was encroaching half way onto the pitch on occasions when he took it, just as he did when the goal was scored. We focused on that and worked on it and we knew that it would be a real threat."

Although Symons accepts that a third league defeat in a row without a goal is a concern, the Fulham manager believes it's a matter of time before the Whites turn it around.

"You look at most clubs in the Championship and they have little spells where things don't go so well," added Symons.

"I think I need to understand that. I'm not happy about it but it was probably pretty much inevitable that at some stage we were going to get a spell where we have a few defeats on the spin. All you can do is try to make sure that doesn't escalate.

"We go into a home game this Saturday against Reading, we'll be very positive and we'll be looking to win that game, end the run, and start a winning run.

"It could be a scruffy goal for us this time, off someone's backside or whatever, I couldn't care less to be honest. I want us to play well every game and entertain our fans and have plenty of chances and plenty of shots, but if it ends up being a scruffy, horrible game and we've got to nick it 1-0, then so be it."

It's unlikely that anyone attending the game will be expecting a goalfest.

Reading sit just one place and two points above Fulham in 17th position. In terms of form, both teams have won just one of their last six Championship matches and with an identical minus-five goal difference (scored five, conceded 10), this Craven Cottage encounter will appear on many weekend pools coupons.

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